

For Immediate Release:

March 21, 2020

Contact: 262-284-8170

Washington Ozaukee Public Health Officer Issues Orders to Protect Long-Term Care Residents

Port Washington, WI – Following confirmed cases of COVID-19 in long-term care (LTC) facilities under the jurisdiction of the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department, Health Officer Kirsten Johnson issued two orders to protect residents. Long-term care facilities are at high risk for severe COVID-19 outbreaks due to their congregate nature and vulnerable population (e.g., older adults with multiple co-morbidities).

The first order immediately requires ALL long-term care facilities to lock down immediately which includes nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and memory care facilities. The lockdown order does not prevent staff from coming or going for their shift, rather, provides guidance to nursing homes on visitor restrictions, healthcare personnel infection prevention strategies, resident monitoring and restrictions, general infection control, managing personal protection equipment (PPE) and supply shortages, reporting to the health department, and requiring documentation of residents who leave the facility for any reason.

The second order immediately requires all first responders and emergency medical services to wear PPE when responding to all health emergency calls including those requesting assistance at long-term care facilities, and nursing homes. Personal protective equipment at a minimum shall include face masks, goggles, and gloves.

“As a public health department, our job is to keep the most vulnerable safe and provide guidance to ensure containment of COVID-19,” said Public Health Officer Kirsten Johnson. “We will also continue to update the public to ensure all residents work together to slow the spread of the coronavirus. When there is risk of community spread, we will let the public know. Please continue to stay home when you are sick, contact your health care provider if you are symptomatic for COVID-19, practice social distancing, and only leave your home when absolutely necessary.”

Ill healthcare personnel (HCP) or visitors are the most likely sources of introduction of COVID-19 into LTC facilities. Please help the health department continue to keep our entire community safe. More information is available on the health department’s website: washozwi.gov or by calling the health department at 262-335-4462 or 262-284-8170.

####